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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
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RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 3121
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RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 6043
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 002018

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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: OPRC KMDR TU

SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
MONDAY, AUGUST 6, 2007

In Today's Papers

Friendly Atmosphere at Turkish Parliament Swearing-in
All papers see it as an "encouraging sign" that a friendly atmosphere, especially between the extreme right MHP and Kurdish DTP members, prevailed at the Saturday parliamentary swearing-in ceremony. DTP leader Ahmet Turk and some other leading party members shook hands with MHP leader Devlet Bahceli and congratulated him on his election to the parliament. "We may have different ideas from the MHP but we will work under the same roof of the parliament.

Being civilized human beings, we will have civil relations," said Turk. Front-page headlines "It Should Always Be Like This" and "Parliament's Encouraging Start" in Yeni Safak and Zaman respectively are echoed by several papers, as they convey hope that the atmosphere of compromise and respect will be preserved.

Sukru Elekdag, CHP lawmaker and the oldest Member of Parliament, chaired the ceremony of 548 deputies.

Weekend papers noted that President Sezer and the military top brass did not attend the ceremony in parliament, saying they had to participate in High Military Council meetings. Papers speculate the military leaders were not willing to come together with the Kurdish DTP MPs and also wanted to display their reaction to Abdullah Gul's possible presidency.

Editorial Commentary on Kurdish MPs in Parliament
Gungor Mengi writes in the mainstream daily Vatan: "To decide whether or not we should be hopeful for the future, given the new formation of the parliament, we should look at the stances of the pro-Kurdish DTP deputies. They seemed happy and showed a positive attitude during the swearing-in ceremony, but their statements were not encouraging enough to make us hopeful about the future. First of all, they are all making evasive statements regarding the PKK and intentionally refraining from denouncing PKK terrorism. If they continue to take this approach in the upcoming parliament sessions, we can only expect more tension. While they were in the parliament

for the swearing-in ceremony, PKK terrorists killed three soldiers and one civilian who refused to help them. This was at least a chance for DTP to denounce such a brutal act, yet they did not take it. It is absolutely against the very fundamental notion of parliamentary democracy to even think there would be a member of the parliament who does not denounce terrorism. Then DTP members will have to be asked eventually: 'What are you doing there?'"

Sezer Designates Erdogan to Form New Government

All papers report President Sezer designated Prime Minister Erdogan on Monday to form the new government. According to the constitution, Erdogan has to submit his cabinet list to Sezer without delay. If the list is approved by Sezer, the government's program will be read in the parliament, two days after which a vote of confidence will be held. Erdogan will most likely announce his new cabinet by the end of the next week and receive a vote of confidence in parliament over the days ahead. The parliament will convene on August 9 for the first round of the parliamentary speaker election. Papers say it will be a difficult week for Erdogan who has to decide whom to nominate for president and for speaker of parliament and also to form a new cabinet.

Maliki to Visit Turkey

All papers report Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, accompanied by five of his cabinet ministers, including the Iraqi special anti-PKK envoy, Security Minister Shirwan al-Waili, will visit Ankara on August 7. Papers report the Turkish side expects Maliki to take concrete forward steps to meet Turkish demands to combat the PKK. Milliyet expects Maliki to denounce the PKK as "a terror organization." On the eve of the Maliki visit, the Iraqi government made a surprising good-will gesture and began discussion of the provisions of an anti-terror agreement drafted by Turkey. Turkish sources say that compromise was reached on a considerable part of

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the deal, and if the Iraqi side agrees on the remaining part, the agreement will be signed by the Prime Ministers of Turkey and Iraq during the visit of Maliki. If Iraq signs the anti-terror deal, Turkey will raise two other agreements for economic and energy cooperation.

Hurriyet and Sabah say Maliki will be handed a file on PKK activities in northern Iraq. Cumhuriyet says that the issue of Kirkuk will not be raised during the visit of Maliki. All papers underline that the visit will take place when the Iraqi PM is going through a difficult political period at home, with his predecessor Jafari leading efforts to see Maliki step down.

Editorial Commentary on Maliki Visit

Murat Yetkin writes in the liberal daily Radikal: "The bottom line is that we should not expect any developments [from the Maliki visit] regarding the fight against the PKK in Iraq. The upcoming visit of Iraqi PM to Ankara, given the nature of his and the accompanying delegation's program, does not even fit into the category of a 'cosmetic effort.' Keeping the dialogue channels open with Iraq is certainly an important thing for Turkey. Enhancement of the Baghdad central authority remains a high priority for Ankara.

Yet the fact of the matter is that the central government of Iraq is currently worse than a lame duck. Maliki's authority in the Iraqi parliament has significantly declined. Not only Sunni groups but also Shiites have given up their support for Maliki. Nowadays Iraqi Kurds are his only supporters. Despite all these facts, there is no alternate to Maliki for discussions. The US continues to negotiate with Iraqi groups to persuade them of the need for a new and stronger Iraqi government. In other words, Maliki will be visiting Ankara with all those sensitive balance issues attached to him. We have to realize that any promises from Iraq at this stage regarding the fight against the PKK in Iraq will not have a real impact except as a show designed to make the public think something is being done."

EU Report Sees 'Alarming' Rise of Islam in Turkey

Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others report the EU-controlled Institute for Security Studies in a report released in June draws attention to the alarming rise of Islam in Turkey, adding that not the AKP but the 1980 military takeover is to blame for this

rise. The report notes the Turkish military did not want a president with an Islamist past. The report also says that it was an "open secret" that Turkey's main Kurdish party DTP was "linked to the PKK." Both AKP and DTP are seen as "anti-Kemalist," says the report. It also says the 10-percent election threshold in Turkey was anti-democratic. The report predicts instability in Turkey to continue until autumn this year.

TV News:

(NTV, 6 A.M.)
Domestic News

- Over the weekend, three soldiers were killed and another was wounded when a land mine exploded in Dicle Township of the southeastern city of Diyarbakir, and one PKK terrorist was killed in Sirnak in clashes with security forces. One villager was murdered by three PKK terrorists for refusing to give them food in the eastern province of Van.

- Prime Minister Erdogan plans to give the post of Parliament Speaker to Koksal Toptan or former Justice Minister Cemil Cicek.

- Kurdish party DTP's former chairman Ahmet Turk said he would not be able to play any reconciliatory role if he condemns the PKK as a terror organization.

- Turkey has earned USD 29.3 billion from privatization projects since 1986.

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International News

- Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki did not accept the resignations of six Sunni Arab cabinet ministers who quit last week.

- US forces said they had killed Haitham al-Badri, the top al-Qaeda leader in the Salahuddin province, whom they blamed for the 2006 attack on Samarra's al-Askari Mosque.

- The Bush administration has withdrawn its nominee for US ambassador to Armenia, Richard Hoagland.

- Iranian police detained more than 200 people, including some foreigners, and seized alcohol and drugs in a raid on a "satanic" underground rock concert.

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